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ABSTRACT

This manual was developed to provide an overview of participative planning for community improvement and to suggest when and how to use games to achieve desired results. It is intended as a tool for the development of relevant activities which will result in innovative solutions to community problems. The manual is organized in four sections. In the first section, approaches to community planning are discussed, and a rationale for game playing is provided. This section also contains an overview of participative decision making. In section 2 readers are instructed in how to create planning games, including information on where to get games and other ideas, aims or purposes of gamesmanship, principles to observe when planning games, criteria for conducting games, and hints for planning games. Section 3 provides ideas on when and how to use games (to get acquainted and improve interpersonal relationships, to arouse creativity, to determine group values, to reconcile differences, and to develop or maintain interest). Finally, section 4 concludes with some additional thoughts on the purpose of games, a summary of decision-making principles, and what to do instead of using games. (KC)

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COMMUNITY PLANNING THROUGH INNOVATIVE STRATEGIES:

GAMES AND OTHER TACTICS

by Joseph Ringers, Jr.

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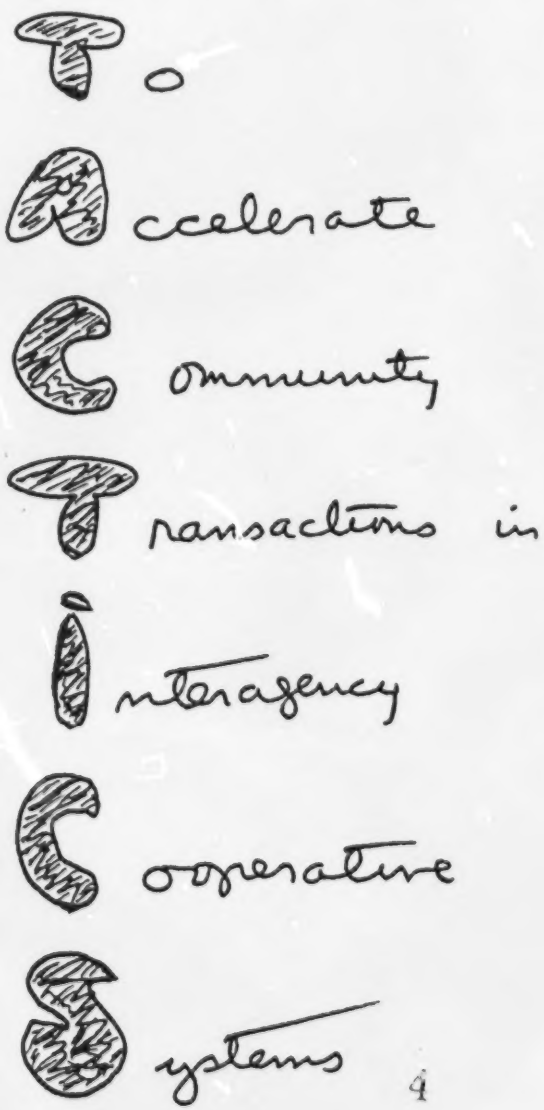
INTRODUCTION

All persons concerned with the delivery of essential human services in a community face: shortages of economic resources, changes in the proportion of elderly and school-aged children in our population, and shifts in attitudes towards how human services should be delivered in our communities. Professional planners and managers find it necessary to involve key community persons in decision making processes in order that relevant programs which respond to community values, goals, and priorities may be considered. These new relationships with lay persons require that techniques be adopted for problem solving and planning in community projects. Games have been found to be an excellent tactic for teaching planning skills as well as for evaluating alternative ways of solving community problems.

This manual was developed to provide an overview of participative planning and to suggest when and how to use games to achieve desired results. It is intended as a tool for the development of relevant activities which will result in innovative solutions to community problems.



Section I

PLANNING

Planning is defined as a scheme or program for the accomplishment or attainment of a desired goal. It is a continuous process employed to deal with pressing current problems or to anticipate future problems. The process may be undertaken by professional planners or managers using sophisticated techniques, or it may be done by participative planning, a technique whereby professionals and non-professionals interact in various aspects of the planning process. The nature of the problems arising in the co-location and collaborative programming of human service agencies requires a planning process that involves clients as well as managers, operating staff, and other interested persons in the process.

Planning Approaches

Several approaches to the planning process are possible. Much planning for pupil accommodations and other educational purposes has been done through *extrapolation*. This approach makes predictions based on past facts and trends and assumes that major trends are reliable predictors. However, experience has shown that reliability is not always the case. For example, this approach has resulted in over-building of schools when the recent changes in attitudes toward birth control and family size were not included in the projections. Because extrapolation performed by professional planners often leaves little room for the development of alternative predictions, communities must use more flexible approaches to planning which reflect community values and priorities. The participation of lay persons is necessary. *Problem solving* and *futuring* are two approaches to involve lay persons as well as planners to help reach a consensus.

The *problem solving* approach requires planners to decide which are the most pressing of the current problems facing the community (or groups). Priorities are set and strategies are designed for solving the most pressing problem. The objective is the accomplishment of quick results. The process is repeated as often as is necessary. This approach requires constant attention to the planning process, but the results may be short-sighted and trigger strong community reaction.

Futuring is an approach which includes participation by persons who will be affected by the planning as well as by professional planners. The goal is to consider alternative futures, and the assumption is that there is a range of options available which can be chosen, depending upon how much effort and how many resources are devoted to the accomplishment of those futures.

Planning with the Community

Every community decision is a compromise and one which frequently is aimed at one portion of a community more than at others. Therefore, to be effective, planning activities must provide opportunities for community involvement in order that common goals, values, and priorities can be determined and separated from individual or agency goals, values, and priorities. Participative planning permits use of the wide variety of skills and expertise of individuals in the community.

Research shows that participative decision making (PDM) results in better decisions than individual decision makers would reach independently. The findings in the area of community planning indicate that participative decision making:

1. is more likely to generate commitment to the actions necessary to carry out the planning,
2. offers the potential of more creative and novel solutions,
3. devotes more attention to the views of the patrons of the services and eases community tensions and feelings of powerlessness,
4. fosters mutual respect among administrators and community members who are involved in the process, and
5. creates a forum for the resolution of differences in a more relaxed atmosphere than the usual adversary situation.

Participative decision making (PDM) develops and strengthens a "sense of community." It does not mean that the professionals necessarily abdicate their responsibilities for decision making, but it does mean a process of planning "with" rather than "for." Although this process is less formal than some planning techniques, it does require time and structure and training of the unitiated. The process usually requires an enabler because it brings together individuals in ways that are not normal for them. An enabler, frequently is a professional planner or administrator who helps the participants to understand the planning task and to recognize and understand the opportunities available. The enabler serves as a catalyst to start the process of involvement.

Why Not Play Games?

Because the process of involvement combines both a learning and socialization process, the enabler must generate a series of activities designed to bring diverse groups together, to develop and arouse creativity and interest, and to provide a means for reaching decisions. These activities focus on developing or strengthening interpersonal relationships within the group and the establishment of some kind of common base from which to begin, something with which all participants can identify regardless of their varied background. This manual is based on the premise that the common youthful activities of playing games and working puzzles are familiar to all. The underlying assumption is that these activities can put the participants into a proper attitude to engage in new activities, and are a suitable tactic for teaching the techniques of problem-solving.

Although individuals speak of war games, games of diplomacy, political games and other games related to serious endeavors, for some, the word "game" may seem too frivolous. They may wish to substitute the word "tactic" for the activity. The word tactic may be defined as a method or means for achieving a desired end or result. Both words, game and tactic, convey the impression of involving two or more persons, and following a set of rules or procedures which focus upon reaching a desired end.

Games and similar tactics produce an atmosphere of relaxation which encourages freedom of action and thought. The problems posed in simulations are easier to cope with than are real life problems. The "for fun" nature of the task allows participants to work in a

relaxed manner which can help produce creative solutions more easily. Once the participants have gained some insight into the techniques for solving simulation problems, they are more likely to apply themselves effectively to real problems.

Even expert planners can benefit from the use of games and tactics. These kinds of activities often are employed when positions which are hardening need to be made more resilient or when problems need to be viewed from a different perspective.

An Overview of Participative Decision Making

To develop skills for planning *with* rather than *for* those who will be affected by the planning decisions, the person who will function as the enabler must learn the different forms of PDM, the basic structure or mechanics of PDM, and the atmosphere or environment within which it works best.

Forms of Participative Decision Making

Participative decision making may take the form of *consultative planning,* in which the planner or planning body seeks advice from the various segments of the community on actions that will affect them. PDM may involve *seeking a consensus* on a tentative plan or decision through the network of existing agencies which function in the area to be affected by the decision. Or PDM may be a *democratic process* in which the possible courses of action are submitted to the affected groups, and majority rule prevails. The choice of the form of PDM is as important as the process itself when measured in terms of the power to be shared—the degree of involvement which the particular group is allowed to have or wishes to have. The security which the planner or planning group feels in the situation also helps to determine the form of participative decision making which will be used in a particular situation.

Basic Mechanics of Particpative Decision Making

At the very outset of an activity, members of the group need to know why they were chosen, what they are expected to do, under what constraints they will operate, and what will be done with the product of their efforts. These topics are generally communicated in the form of a "charge" and include:

- Goal definition—what is to be done
- Access routes to necessary information and assistance
- Authority, if any, over staff
- Responsibilities to the group or community from which appointed
- Time constraints
- Assistance available—staff, funds
- Membership and leadership—how selected and how vacancies will be filled
- Possible uses of the results; other sources of recommendations, if any, and the time frame for the appointing body's consideration of the recommendations.

The first meeting of the group should allow time for participants to get to know each other and to discuss the charge thoroughly to be certain it is understood. The group also should formulate ground rules for the conduct of the business of the group, including the procedures for reaching decisions. At an early meeting, the group should agree upon a

work schedule that may allow for formation of sub-committees as well as the development of methods for securing wider community input and methods for keeping the community informed of the work of the committee.

Staff Involvement

Staff from the appointing body should provide relevant information to each member of the group. This information should include:

- Prior or concurrent studies on related topics
- Alternatives that have been conceived and/or tried before
- Data pertinent to the area under study
- Comparable products of other communities
- Methods to gain access to other necessary information

The staff also should: familiarize the group with planning techniques and the area in which they will be planning; and make suggestions about how they can work effectively including the kind of work schedule which will benefit the group. A staff member should assume the role of "enabler" and discreetly move to the sidelines as the momentum of the group indicates it is ready to proceed without assistance. A close relationship with the natural leadership of the group, as well as with the total group, should be maintained by staff in order to provide assistance as necessary, but care should be taken not to influence decisions.

The PDM Environment

Informality is the key word for getting a group ready for the serious business of planning. Self introductions and presentation of personal needs assessments (why I am here; what I expect to get out of this activity; and what I can contribute to it) are very helpful. A comfortable meeting place should be provided and arranged in a way that will be conducive to the process. Occasionally, the arrangement will be a formal one with the participants all facing the leadership element; but more often it will be an informal arrangement where eye contact between group members can be maximized, and it will be difficult for cliques to form. The "enabler" should watch out for the car pools, the group that always sits together, and any other signal that the group is being fractured and formed into "voting blocks." Ways must be found to re-shuffle the group. If several alternative meeting places can be arranged, the participants will not be able to go to their "usual seats." Refreshments are helpful—a coffee pot should be provided at the beginning of the meeting and a "break" should be taken during the meeting.

PDM Management

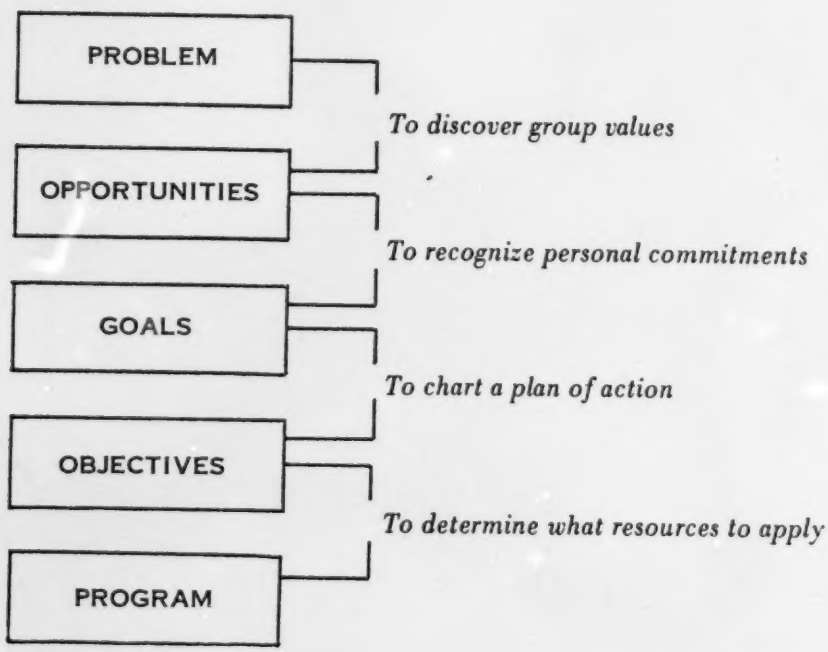
Some groups record precise minutes, but it is usually more productive to keep only informal notes of topics discussed, conclusions reached, and similar matters. Precise minutes, which ascribe statements to individuals, are subject to criticism and exact transcripts of proceedings are expensive and difficult to use. Less-than-precise "minutes" complete with names may result in much time being spent to "correct the record." Although informal notes are recommended, when tentative or final decisions are reached, the language should be noted very carefully and recorded.

It is difficult for a committee, task force, or council to write reports. Sub-committees should be designated to prepare draft statements or reports that incorporate the various decisions reached along the way. The full group then can consider the sub-committee reports and agree upon a final product in much less time than if the entire group were to attempt to write the report during their work sessions. If a consensus cannot be reached, dissidents should be urged to prepare a minority report to be reviewed by the entire group. It is possible that the differences between the main report and the minority report may be diminished before being sent to the appointing body.

Summary

PDM provides opportunities for planners, managers, and clients to establish new relationships and to gain better understandings of the roles each must play in planning successful community ventures. Games and similar tactics are useful for teaching the techniques of PDM as well as enhancing the interpersonal relationships essential for reaching the necessary compromises in relation to community goals, values, and proiroties. The various forms of PDM do not require professional decision makers to forfeit their responsibilities, but the emphasis is shifted from "planning for " to "planning with" the community. Before attempting to involve the community in planning activities, planners are urged to become familiar with the basic mechanics of PDM, the roles that participants might assume, and techniques for managing the process.

WHEN TO CONSIDER GAMES FOR PLANNING



Section II

CREATING PLANNING GAMES

Where to Get Games and Other Ideas

The prime purpose of this manual is to provide ideas that can be converted into games and tactics to help planning groups find solutions to specific problems. For further information, see:

- *Handbook of Games and Simulation Exercises,* edited by G. I. Gibbs, and published by E. & F. N. Spon, Litd., London, 1974.
- *The Theory of Games and Economic Behavior,* by John Von Jeumann and Oskar Morganstern, published by John Wiley & Sons, 1964.
- *Community Education Interaction Exercises,* by John W. Warden and published by the Mid-Atlantic Community Education Consortium at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, Virginia, 1978.
- *Playing for Real,* by Muriel Akamatsu, Cooperative Extension Services, West Virginia University at Morgantown, West Virginia.

Phi Delta Kappa (Box 789, Bloomington, Indiana 47401) has an excellent "model program for community and professional involvement" which is helpful in setting educational goals and objectives. The purposes of the PDK program is to rank educational goals, to assess how well current programs are meeting these goals, and to develop performance objectives designed to meet the priority ranked goals. The program provides for the involvement of students, staff, and community and requires six to twelve months for completion. It can be purchased with enough materials for large groups. A workshop packet also can be purchased at low cost (about $3.00) to allow for review and evaluation of the materials and process.

An especially fine *planning simulation* designed for use in high school social studies courses is recommended for use to provide the non-professional planners of a group with a better grasp of the dimensions of community planning and the roles which various individuals play in solving community problems. Entitled *Inner City Planning,* this educational simulation, developed by Creative Studies, Inc. and published by the Macmillan Company, New York, is a good training exercise for developing a cadre of non-professional planners.

The ultimate in creativity is to develop games, making them especially relevant to particular problems; Section III of this manual includes ideas for designing games to meet specific planning needs.

Aims or Purposes of Gamesmanship

Games and similar tactics not only encourage creativity, they also provide an opportunity to expand the horizons of each participating member of the group. Each member will have an opportunity to express new concepts, and to conceive more and better ideas as a result of the interaction with the group. Although the major purposes of games is to provide learning experiences in planning strategies and techniques and to enable the group

to reach a consensus, the games have a more important value in that they enable the participants to gain an appreciation of each others' talents and values.

Interpersonal relationships should be improved and strengthened as members gain a better understanding of the talents of individual members. People should see each other in different ways and they should gain a better understanding of opposing viewpoints and an appreciation of the reasons for differences. New relationships will begin to grow; old differences will be less severe. A greater degree of confidence between divergent groups should develop as participants learn to work with each other in pleasant activities.

Games are helpful for introducing new concepts. In real life situations, people are reluctant to admit lack of knowledge, but they are not similarly embarrassed when the games approach is used. They know that games have different rules in different areas, and that the rules should be reviewed before a game is played.

Underlying all participative planning activities is the desire to raise the acceptance level for new programs or activities which result from the planning. The congenial atmosphere of games facilitates the development of new relationships among the planners and encourages participants to absorb more of the rationale supporting the new project. As a result, participating community members are more likely to develop better attitudes toward the staff planners, the process, and the project. Having participated with the professional planners in a manner, and on a level, which permits each to be a major contributor to the process, participants are more likely to accept the final product of those endeavors.

Principles to Observe When Planning Games

- Games must not be frivolous; they must be purposeful, and participants must understand the purpose (either before or after the games).
- Games must rely heavily on "common sense" and not require technical skills that participants may not possess.
- Games must not embarrass or offend either participants or any other member of the community.
- Games must be easy to understand and should have flexible rules to permit such "side trips" as participants wish to make.
- Games should not result in the isolation or polarization of participants.
- Games should not require active participation by all; some will participate merely by observing.
- Games should respect the privacy of individual participants and leaders should be alert to indications that an individual's privacy is being threatened.
- Games should be designed to bring out the best qualities in each participant and to avoid awkward situations that could bring out the worst.
- Games should develop or improve "togetherness" in the group and accentuate the cooperative spirit.

Criteria for Conducting Games

- Leaders must avoid pitting one group against another.
- Leaders must be positive in nature and focus activities toward reaching consensus.
- Leaders must not reject ideas or solutions, only encourage participants to find a better or more acceptable one.
- Leaders must provide an opportunity for all to participate at each stage, yet not require participation.
- Leaders must foster intergenerational and intercultural mix of participants.
- Leaders must complete a game during one session because players may change.
- Leaders may use time-structuring devices yet must allow for flexibility in time allotments.
- Leaders must allow for different levels of player sophistication or experience.
- Leaders must not require unusual or sophisticated materials.

RECIPE FOR PLANNING GAMES

Ingredients

One large community problem or ripe opportunity

Knowledge of successes and failures of others

Acquaintance with other planning games or systems

A good sense of humor

A large measure of good taste

Several interested community persons

Some creativity

Directions

Take one large community opportunity and separate the strong group values and personal commitments from the wants and desires. Put the wants and desires aside for use in other recipes. Use creativity to combine reports of the successes and failures of others with knowledge of available planning tactics (games and systems). Mold into targets or goals toward which to strive. Form a team from several interested community persons to devise a strategy or plan to achieve the selected goal. Using good taste and good humor, combine the team and other ingredients in pleasant, non-threatening surroundings. Separate the group goals from individual goals, and blend into savory activities. Simmer until a plan of action is formed. Apply this to the community problem, and await positive results.

Section III

WHEN AND HOW TO USE GAMES

For the purpose of this manual, games and tactics will be divided into five categories according to their objectives:

Part I. Getting acquainted and improving relationships
Part II. Arousing creativity
Part III. Determining group values and priorities
Part IV. Reconciling differences
Part V. Developing or maintaining interest

Part I. Getting Acquainted and Improving Interpresonal Relationships

Games in this category require a degree of showmanship; being an extrovert does not hurt one bit. These activities tend to bring out the child in everyone, and the mood for these games should be light and close to frivolous. These games are "ice breakers" and tend to humanize participants into the common denominator of being "people." They should be selected to bring out the best qualities in every participant. Games in this category can be divided into two groups: attention getters and mixers.

Attention getters. The first opportunity to capture the interest of participants (or invitees) is with the announcement of the meeting. An attractive or unusual notice will command attention and may cause the recipient to discuss it with others, thus expanding its effect to others. The invitation also provides an opportunity to set the tone for the meeting. A few examples of unique formats include:

a. Use the format of a sale announcement, an election ballot, a tax bill, a stock offering (Illustration A), a doctor's prescription pad, etc. Adapt the announcement to read like the chosen format.

b. Use a unique mailer such as a brown bag (Illustration B). Folded in half, it serves as an envelope. If an unusual shape is chosen, check with the postmaster to be sure it is mailable. Consider a brightly colored envelope or one with a "teaser" statement on it which arouses curiosity.

Mixers. If the audience has a tendency to congregate with their friends, getting them to associate with different persons may be facilitated through the use of tags, programs, furniture, and other seating arrangements. A few illustrations of mixers include:

a. Four Letter Words
Issue a single letter applied to name tag or program to each person on arrival. Have each person find three other persons with the letters needed to form certain prearranged words, such as: fish, bird, game, help, love, play, etc. This mixer will divide your group into sub-groups for other activities. Be prepared for some "leftovers" who might be encouraged to reshape their

Illustration A

In the opinion of counsel, interest in this conference is bound to generate great interest due to the high quality educational yield and low striking price.

25TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

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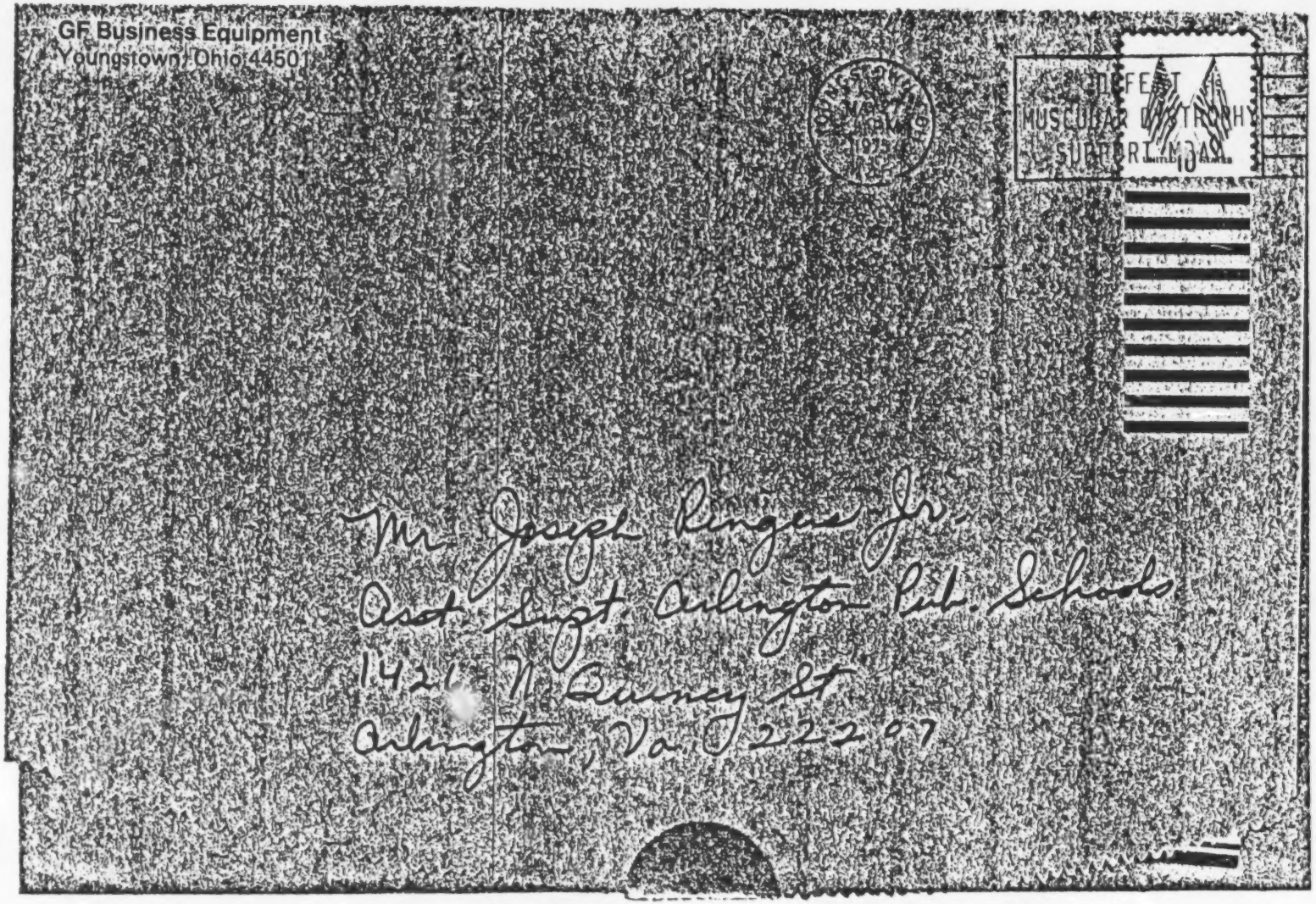


Illustration B

letters (F to E, C to D, I to T, T to H). This activity adds to the excitement of meeting new friends.

b. Color Coding
Color code each name tag or program with labels, felt pens, etc., and require participants to group themselves according to similar colors or to a rainbow effect in each group.

c. Build-A-Lunch
Give each participant a ticket for 4-6-8 portions (depending on seating arrangements) of a single part of a lunch (drinks, sessert, main dish, salad, etc.). Each person must then join others to form a group for a complete lunch. This mixer can also be used to "build-a-sandwich," or at a break time to "build-a-break" (cups, liquids, pastries, and even rest-room passes).

d. Mystery Chef
Each participant brings a dish for the refreshment or luncheon period. Each dish receives a number, and each contributor receives a different number when entering the meeting. The person with the number corresponding to each dish (not his/her own) must learn who brought the dish, learn something about that person (and the dish), and introduce the "mystery chef" to the entire group. Drawing from a hat could reduce the number of introductions but each participant would have made an effort to learn about their own "mystery chef."

e. Can You Top This?
Have participants join in small groups to create a joke or story in a certain category (kids, age, school, drunks, etc.) and to select a story teller. Each story teller makes a presenatation to the entire audience. Applause determines a winner, which entitles that group to choose the category for the next meeting.

Part II. Arousing Creativity Through Games

Activities and games in this category include puzzles, brainstorming, creation of lists or charts, experience sharing, discussions, and simulations. These games allow the hopes, dreams, values, desires, and ideas of participants to surface and be tossed out in such a way that their acceptance is tested with a minimum of embarrassment or defensiveness on the part of the contributor. When one idea is put into context with another idea, frequently a creative solution is generated which neither of the original idea contributors would have conceived individually. A few exampics include:

a. Fill It In
A situation is described, giving relevant background information, problems experienced or obstacles to be overcome. Mention one or two options for coping with the situation, but *stop short of a real decision.* Have sub-groups complete the solution and report their ideas to the main group. Have the main group discuss relative merits of each solution. Attempt to establish criteria to guide the group in solving its own problems. The group should be ready now to address the real problem.

b. Brainstorming
In this activity ideas are generated and expressed without regard to their value.

The participants are encouraged to express thoughts which are put on newsprint or blackboards so that they can be read by the entire group. This technique works best when the problem or objective is well-defined and enthusiasm and competition are factors so that many ideas are expressed, no matter how novel or impractical. The leaders should discourage the judging of ideas until idea generation slows down. Having all ideas in full view encourages others to modify them and to conceive of new combinations of ideas. Evaluation or ranking of ideas should follow when the group ceases to generate new ones.

c. Idea Box

Everyone writes out personal concepts, ideas, or solutions for the exercise; multiple contributions are acceptable. Combine the slips in a container, and have different individuals draw out the slips, giving the pros and cons of the idea. Group participation is welcome. The group subsequently ranks the ideas in accordance with previously established criteria and method of ranking. This activity gives annonymity to the contributors and may help to develop an openness in future exercises.

d. New Arrangement Locater

Identify a need, and design a matrix with a column for each component necessary to satisfy that need. Current and alternative ways of providing each component are then listed on separate lines. New combinations of components from different lines are joined for a solution to the need as illustrated in the following matrix:

Need: *Use excess space in a school*

Method	**To Be Managed by:**	**Use of proceeds**
Offer space without cost to other groups	School principal	By school with excess space
Rent space to other groups		
Transfer space to another agency by lease	Community coordinator	For maintenance of the building
		To support new programs
Use for new program and charge fees	Adult education director	
	A tenant agency	Central funds for use by all programs
	Another agency	
Sell building to another agency and rent back needed space	Central office of the schools	

e. Questions as a Technique

Questions can cause people to analyze their own feelings before framing an

answer. They can be used to test a group's position on an issue or to clarify positions on issues. Questions can be put into the "game" context by a variety of simulations, such as:

1. Have a sub-group take the role of clients of a particular service and behave as they believe the clients would: asking for more service, different service, or expanded service. Let a second group take the part of the agency administrators or governing board and respond in what they believe is the typical fashion. Let the main group critique what they have seen and heard.

2. Cast select members on the group as challengers of an agency's policies, service level, or other issue. Urge the challenger to be abrasive and to really test the limits of good taste. Have the group members express themselves on the matters discussed. "Seeing ourselves as others see us" may bring about some degree of change as a result of the exercise.

f. The Use of a Matrix to Analyze or Prioritize

There are many ways to use matrices to identify characteristics or attributes. Examples include:

1. Simple Two-Element Matrix

   One simple way is a two-element matrix which permits the group to identify its values merely by agreeing on the language necessary to list those values in chart form. Elements which relate to each other are checked in the common space. This technique shows the relative significance of each element.

TECHNIQUES	QUALITIES				

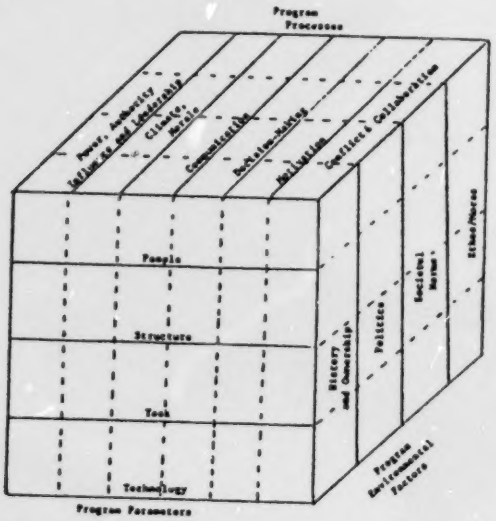
2. Matrix to Determine Values

   The same two-element matrix can be used to determine a consensus of the relative values for the group by assigning rankings, such as 1, 2, or 3 to each single element listed in the vertical column. By combining individual rankings, a consensus will emerge.

TECHNIQUES	QUALITIES RANKED INDIVIDUALLY				GRAND TOTAL OF VALUES

3. Three-Element Matrix

A three-element matrix can be used to display more complex issues and to indicate visually additional combinations of the three elements to effect a solution or a new arrangement. The following example was developed by Schwartz, *et al.*, University of Virginia, 1980.



4. Balance Sheet

Another matrix approach is the "Balance Sheet" used to catalog the relative importance of gains and losses. This cataloging is helpful to competing parties because each can rank items differently and reach a decision to join or not join a venture.

Items	Gain	Major Gain	Little Consequence	Some Loss	Serious Loss

5. T-Account

A very simple way to list "give and gets" or "gains and losses" or "pluses and minuses" is the simple T-Account.

GIVE	GET

GAIN	LOSS

+	-

Part III. Determining Group Values and Priorities Through Games

In make-believe land, people are willing to express themselves with fewer inhibitions than in real situations. Simulations, play acting, futuring, and other "what if" activities reduce reluctance to express basic values and beliefs. Games and other tactics in this area depend heavily upon the world of make-believe in which things can be just as we want them to be without the usual constraints that thwart us in the real world. In addition to simulations, play acting and futuring activities in this category include: straw man proposals (setting out candidate proposals for review and alteration), fish bowl activities (planners-in-residence and charettes), and "complete-the-story" games. Some illustrations follow:

Simulations. Simulation games require participants to think through a specified situation according to predetermined rules. The situation is designed to be a simplified model of a real system and to be a learning experience in the process of planning and decision making. The activities help to bring out personal attitudes toward life situations and to convey concepts of the professionals to lay persons and vice versa. In addition, the simulation teaches participants more about the structure and determinants of a system and their relationships to it. The following are examples of simulation activities:

a. Describe a hypothetical community. Consider it a "new town" in which participants wish to have the best possible combination of human services. Set up delivery system for those services. Compare "ideal" with "real" community, and determine what kinds of adjustments can be made in the "real" community to make it resemble the "ideal" community delivery system. Determine a plan for reaching that goal.

b. Start with a community budget for human services. Re-allocate those monies in the best possible way to maximize return from the dollars. Consider transferring some responsibilities, merging some agencies, or dropping unnecessary or duplicate services. Compare with present. Identify differences and consider the logic for differences. Develop a strategy and plan for converting to "the best possible return for the dollars."

c. Imagine the future. Ask "futuring" questions, such as: what is the future likely to be? What issues must be solved to arrive at that future time? If different levels and combinations of resources (human and economic) are applied, what alternative futures are possible? Which are worth working toward? After each participant jots ideas on a piece of paper, ask them to form small groups to discuss the ideas for a few minutes and to reach consensus. Have the groups report to the entire audience and attempt to reach a consensus. This product can be used as a needs assessment procedure for several sessions.

d. Play acting. Role assumption is helpful in enabling those who provide services to understand the views of their clients. Very simply, the activity takes the following form:

   1. Divide the larger group into sub-groups. The entire group need not participate; it may be just as helpful to have a small case of "actors" perform before the larger group.

   2. Assign roles and have the players take on the characters, actions, language,

and concerns as they know them—the two sets of players—the clients and the service providers.

3. Have "clients" prepare a strategy, but have "service providers" respond as they believe would be characteristic in that particular situation.

4. Play out the simulation and have the entire group, including players, react to what was seen and heard.

5. Devise goals for improving the service delivery system based upon this activity.

e. Eliminations. Some individuals like to contribute ideas. Other people are not confident enough to advance their ideas, but are willing to react to ideas and to identify those ideas which they consider good or bad. Therefore, in some situations, it is necessary to put up "straw men" to cause people to become active participants. In these types of situations, lists of ideas can be made and persons can become involved at whatever stage they wish. Given a subject, the procedure is:

1. Small groups are formed and members are invited to offer ideas or associations they have had with the subject. The group leader should be prepared with items to start the lists.

2. Each small group should prepare a list of the ideas and associations on large sheets of paper which are then put on display.

3. Members of the total group are then invited to eliminate whatever they cannot accept as their position on the subject.

4. Small groups are formed again (not necessarily the original groups) for more intimate discussion of the reduced lists, and further changes are invited.

5. The amended lists are again displayed for critiquing by the total group.

6. The process is repeated until consensus is reached.

f. Setting priorities. The procedure is:

1. Brainstorm to prepare a list of goals. Brainstorming means to take every suggestion offered without any attempt to evaluate.

2. Provide each participant with a specified number of markers with designated values. For example, the markers might represent dollar amounts in a budget for the activity for which goals are to be set.

3. Have each participant allocate the markers in terms of the importance affixed to each goal.

4. Total the markers for each goal or find the average (total divided by number of participants) and the result will be an indication of the priorities of the group.

g. Ranking. In ranking, the procedure is:

1. Divide into small group.

2. Have each small group list goals, but assign no priority.

3. Have goals ranked by the *other* groups.

4. Have each group provide a rationale for each list of priorities.

5. Strike low priorities from each list until an acceptable number of high priorities is left.

6. Have the total group reach a consensus on the ranking of the remaining goals.

Part IV. Reconciling Differences

One of the greatest problems created when diverse groups are brought together is the unwillingness of participants to alter their position on a question. To avoid the tendency toward polarization and the inability to accept a compromise position, activities should be planned to have the participants view the situation from a different perspective. Exposure to and attempts to understand other points-of-view could help to reconcile differences. In this type of activity, there is a definite need for some person, such as the enabler or activity leader, to serve as a mediator and to fulfill the function of a catalyst for change. Games and other tactics helpful in these situations include: role reversals, creation of lists which are reduced until the issues become clearer and negotiation can be employed, and mediation in which a go-between moves from group to group in an effort to find the middle group for compromise. Some examples of activities which may be helpful follow.

a. Role reversal. When an impasse is reached, and efforts to compromise have failed, this play-acting activity causes persons to look at the basis of the conflict from the viewpoint of the other persons in the dispute. The procedure is:

   1. Have the opponents develop a rationale for the *opposite* side of the question.

   2. Have them determine the least objectionable solution to the problem from this new viewpoint (opposite to their true position).

   3. Have them determine the minimum acceptable solution to the problem from this new viewpoint.

   4. Resume negotiations at their original position, and seek movement from each side. With a new appreciation for the concerns of the opposite side, a compromise may be easier to obtain.

b. Listing priorities. The purpose of this activity is to resolve conflicts by reducing the number of peripheral issues which develop during discussions. It is designed to enable to parties to strike off the least important issues and to focus on those which are more important. These issues are the hard issues, on which substantial compromise by the parties will still be required in final negotiations. The end result is that negotiations will not be clouded by inconsequential items and may be helped by each group understanding what has been given up by the opposite group before focusing on the hard issues. The procedure is:

   1. Have each group prioritize the solutions which would be acceptable to them.

   2. Combine the two lists side by side.

3. Have combined groups discuss the lists and reduce them by striking off the least acceptable solutions, giving some rationale for the action.

4. Have the group continue striking from each list until a smaller number of acceptable solutions is reached.

5. Negotiate by trading, altering solutions or other action until a universally acceptable solution is reached.

c. Mediation. Mediation experience can be used in conjunction with the preceding exercise. When each group has performed the various functions described, and negotiations for a universally acceptable solution have been unsuccessful, the procedure is:

1. Select one or more persons to act as mediators. Be certain that members of opposing sides are equally numbered on the mediation team.

2. Have the mediators meet with each side until they understand fully the position and the amount of movement which each side will tolerate in reaching a compromise. It may be necessary to meet more than once with each side in an effort to test out new limits or new directions in reaching a final solution.

3. Have the mediator develop and present an acceptable solution to the total group when they are satisfied that they have an area of compromose.

4. Have the advocates of each position discuss the "universally acceptable solution" and to evaluate the effectiveness of the mediation effort.

Part V. Developing or Maintaining Interest

The goal of these activities is to create a sense of enthusiasm for the process or project. The activities also provide for the development of a "sense of ownership" for the project by having all persons participate to some degree. The activities should illustrate available alternatives and they also should provide opportunities for discovering the opportunities and obstacles in each alternative and for examining what has been experienced by others and the new opportunities attainable in the local community. Activities in this area include real and simulated experiences, such as: charrettes, case studies, charting, "storefront" planning, and show-and-tell.

a. Charrette. "En charrette," a French term, originated with the architectural students who transported their projects on two-wheel carts through the streets of Paris from their garrets to the E'cole des Beaux Arts. Last minute inspirations would cause them to pause and work in the streets where ordinary citizens would critique the work and make suggestions. Today, the term is used to designate an intensive planning effort which brings participants of various disciplines and roles into close, brainstorming forums. The purpose of the forums is to arrive at plans or solutions which are feasible and to which the participants can be committed.

For example, local officials and citizens, professional consultants, and others with expertise join together in a retreat atmosphere for a period of time (days or even weeks) to d ine a problem or situation, develop concepts

confront each other with different values or expectations, analyze the problems, and develop creative solutions. Time is left at the end of each day for an open public forum on the work accomplished and the directions taken. The end result of most charrettes includes: concrete proposals for action and compromise by the governing bodies; a wealth of information collected for and developed by the participants; and a greater appreciation of the different viewpoints and perspectives of those who participated in the experience.

b. Charting. The purpose of charting is to identify the activities necessary to accomplish the goal set by the group. The chart should contain a time line and identify the persons or groups responsible for the activities listed. The interrelationships of the various stages of the planning effort become clear through the charting process. Although the focus of the activity is the production of a chart, the discussions which accompany its construction reveal the perspectives and skills of the participants. Some charts are developed as games. One illustration is the Educational Facilities Laboratories "Guide to Alternative Ways of Financing a School Building."* Both the Educational Facilities Laboratories and the Council of Education Facility Planners** participated in the production of a chart to illustrate "Our Plan for Planning." It includes instructions for community planners interested in participative decision making to develop plans with the community for a variety of community projects.

c. Storefront Planning. This activity involves moving the professional planners from their normal work site to a public location so that interested community members may stop by and comment upon what is happening. Sometimes called "planners-in-residence", the professional planners may use a camper or mobile home as a base of operations in locations where their work may be examined. There are several considerations when this tactic is adopted: (1) the on-site planners must be skilled in and willing to work in the "fish bowl" atmosphere, (2) the planning activity must be such that it allows for random comments from various observers, and (3) there must be time and a method to capture the contributions of those who stop by to see what is going on. One successful technique is to diagram ideas on large sheets of paper and to display them. Some of those ideas should be incorporated in the final product of the planning activity. It is beneficial to have periodic statements, diagrams, or sketches published as the planning effort proceeds. Persons seeing the contributions of others are likely to want to be represented in the planning activity.

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Section IV

SOME FINAL THOUGHTS

The ideas and suggestions included in this manual are intended to be just that—ideas and suggestions. They are intended to stimulate the creativity of persons who wish to help communities to become better places to live. Each of the ideas and suggestions should be evaluated and adapted in accordance with a specific situat on. Because the timing and setting will affect the success or failure of a particular strategy or tactic, enablers and planners must choose the appropriate tactic for the particular circumstances at a given moment.

Purpose

There are three purposes for using games and similar tactics:

1. **To improve relationships.** These types of activities are helpful in breaking down barriers and reducing the polarization of positions which prevent reasonable people from reaching compromise positions. When participating in these activities, individuals must adopt behavior patterns which are different from those they usually employ in their role in the community. The assumption of a new role provides opportunities for persons to see each other differently and to come together in new ways. As a result, new attitudes toward different viewpoints are likely to be developed.

2. **To provide learning experiences.** When non-professionals are permitted to participate in professional planning, there are many skills to learn. Similarly, the professional planner has a need to gain a significant amount of information and understanding regarding the setting and values in which the products of the planning will be used. Thus, both professionals and non-professionals benefit from the multiple learning experiences which can be provided through the use of games, simulations and other tactics. The use of games imposes less risk than real conditions and problems; and, during the course of the activities, there are opportunities for the participants to learn more about each other; to learn what skills each may bring to the activity and what contributions each may make to the situation.

3. **To reach consensus.** When diverse sections of a community are brought together to reach a common decision, each person comes with a different set of values and experiences. Language differences can complicate communication. Games and similar tactics which impose a common set of rules can begin the dialogue necessary for reaching consensus. Games create a non-threatening atmosphere in which potential solutions may be considered. Games recall the joy of youth and more enthusiasm can be generated by participation in them than may be possible in a working situation. However, leaders must make an effort to recognize when consensus is possible so that the activity is not prolonged unduly.

Decision Making Principles

Underlying all decision making, and especially consensus-type processes, there are certain rules which apply:

1. Sufficient time and opportunity must be allowed to reach consensus on the set goals.

2. The range of available choices must be known and understood by the participants.

3. Each participant must have reasonable access to necessary relevant information.

4. The choice makers must be reasonable and willing to compromise in an effort to reach consensus.

5. There is a constant need for a subtle type of leadership or guidance in order to:

   a. hold the group together and provide a change of pace when the harmony of the group is unduly threatened,
   b. constantly remind the group of the direction in which it should be heading, and
   c. provide creative suggestions to problems or impasses as they arise.

6. The leadership person must be persistent, patient, and persuasive.

And In Conclusion . . .

Before adopting or adapting games and similar tactics as appropriate activities for planning or other decision making, it would be well to consider the following questions.

1. Why use games rather than beginning real activities directed toward the solution of the problem or the attainment of the goal?

2. What are the reasons for believing the activities will have value for the participants in this particular situation?

3. Have goals to accomplish this activity been set? Do the activities have a specific purpose?

4. Have any of the persons who will be involved had experience with the particular tactic to be employed? If not, have the ideas been tested with others, and have any of the people involved "walked through" the process?

5. Have arrangements been made for the materials and other resources which will be needed for the activity? Has the place where the activities will be conducted been checked?

6. If an activity flounders or fails, how will the situation be handled?

A session to critique the activity should be planned in order to determine what worked, what didn't work, what was learned, what was gained and what was lost. Such a session will be helpful in planning subsequent activities in addition to strengthening the support of participants who will gain a better understanding of the purpose and role of gamesmanship in participative decision making.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Joe Ringers has been a teacher, director of adult education, assistant superintendent of schools, author, consultant, and lecturer. Recognized as the "Planner of the Year" in 1974 by the Council of Educational Facilities Planners, International, he also served on the expert panel for the coordination of school and community facilities with the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in Paris, France in 1975.

He was awarded a doctorate in educational administration at the University of Virginia specializing in Community Education and holds master's degrees in both business administration and educational administration. He was Assistant Superintendent of Schools in Arlington, Virginia, where he functioned as a facility planner and owner's representative for school projects and joint projects involving other community agencies. He has been a consultant to Educational Facilities Laboratories on several projects including the development of the series of pamphlets concerning community school centers.

His other publications include:

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